

## II. CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method for transmission over packet networks, the method comprising:  
detecting, at a first node, at least one next node;  
creating a channel between the first node and the at least one next node;  
receiving, at the first node, a first packet;  
detecting a protocol of the first packet;  
merging the first packet with a second packet of the same protocol as the first packet; and  
transmitting the merged first packet and second packet to the at least one next node via  
the channel.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first packet contains circuit-based  
information.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the second packet contains circuit-based  
information.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
determining whether available bandwidth exceeds a predetermined threshold.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined threshold is set to provide a  
minimum level of quality of service for voice communications.
6. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:  
rejecting a communication related to the first packet.
7. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined threshold is set to provide a  
minimum level of quality of service for data communications.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the first node is an existing media gateway.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the first node is connected to a circuit-switched voice network.

10. (Original) An internet trunking protocol node comprising:  
a channel interface for assigning a channel to a next node;  
a port for transmitting and receiving a plurality of packets to and from the next node;  
a processor for performing instructions in response to received packets; and  
a memory, in communication with the processor, for storing a plurality of instructions,  
wherein the instructions comprise:  
instructions, responsive to the receipt of a packet, for detecting a protocol of the packet;  
instructions for merging a plurality of packets of the same protocol into a merged packet;  
instructions for splitting a packet comprised of a plurality of packets of the same protocol;  
instructions for routing packets according to an internet protocol.

11. (Original) The internet trunking protocol node of claim 10 wherein the port is connected to a packet communications voice network.

12. (Currently Amended) The internet trunking protocol node of claim 10 wherein the port is connected to a ~~second~~ media gateway through the packet communications voice network.

13. (Original) The internet trunking protocol node of claim 10 wherein the port is connected to a common packet communications voice network.

14. (Original) The internet trunking protocol node of claim 10 wherein at least one of the plurality of packets contains circuit-based information.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for establishing voice communication over packet networks, the method comprising:

receiving an internet protocol packet at a node in communication with a plurality of nodes;

splitting the internet protocol packet into a plurality of internet trunking protocol (ITP) packets, wherein each ITP packet of the plurality of ITP packets contains circuit-based information;

for each of the plurality of ITP packets,

determining a next node to which the ITP packet is to be transmitted;

determining whether available bandwidth to the next node exceeds a predetermined threshold;

assigning a channel to the ITP packet; and

if there is a second ITP packet that is to be transmitted to the next node, merging the second ITP packet with the ITP packet.